

Message Text

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-----242257 033955 /61

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BERLIN IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
USMISSION USBERLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 041758

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SOPN, APUB, GE

SUBJECT: MEDIA COVERAGE OF EMBASSY OPENING

REF: BERLIN 5316

1. DEPARTMENT HAS PREPARED FOLLOWING PRESS GUIDANCE FOR
EMBASSY IN ANTICIPATION OF QUESTIONS REGARDING THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF EMBASSY AND RELATED COSTS. DEPARTMENT
PRESS OFFICE WILL DRAW UPON SAME GUIDANCE.

A. THE NEW CHANCERY BUILDING IN EAST BERLIN ENCOMPASSES
71,592 SQUARE FEET OF BOTH OFFICE AND LIVING SPACE. THE
RENTAL CHARGE IS \$383,800 PER YEAR PAID IN GDR MARKS
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AT THE RATE OF 2.4 DM/\$1. THIS RENTAL RATE IS VERY
FAVORABLE WHEN COMPARED WITH THE RATE CHARGED TO OTHER
WESTERN FOREIGN MISSIONS FOR SIMILAR BUILDINGS LOCATED ON
OR NEAR THE PRIME UNTER DEN LINDEN AREA, WHICH IS ONE
BLOCK FROM OUR CHANCERY.

B. VERY FEW BUILDINGS WERE AVAILABLE FOR CONSIDERATION

FOR OUR NEW CHANCERY. AFTER THREE VISITS BY STATE DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVES (AUGUST 1973, MARCH 1974 AND AUGUST 1974), THE HAUS DES HANDWERKS WAS CLEARLY OUR BEST ALTERNATIVE ON THE BASIS OF SUCH FACTORS AS LOCATION, AND SIZE, ANTICIPATED INCREASES IN THE EMBASSY'S STAFF. C. THE BUILDING IS CONVENIENTLY LOCATED, ATTRACTIVE AND WELL-APPOINTED. THE GDR AUTHORITIES COMPLETELY RENOVATED THE BUILDING AND RECONFIGURED THE INTERIOR TO MEET OUR REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE RENTAL CONSIDERATION, FOLLOWING A U.S. DESIGN PLAN. LOCAL CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS WERE FOLLOWED AND GDR WORKMANSHIP WAS EXCELLENT THROUGHOUT.

D. GIVEN THE OVERALL SHORTAGE OF BOTH OFFICE AND HOUSING SPACE IN EAST BERLIN, THE NEW CHANCERY WILL BE HIGHLY FUNCTIONAL. ONE WING OF THE BUILDING WILL HOUSE OUR MARINE SECURITY GUARDS AT A SAVINGS TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. PART OF THE AREA ON THE FIFTH FLOOR IS AVAILABLE FOR FURTHER EXPANSION OF BOTH LIVING AND OFFICE SPACE. CONSISTENT WITH OUR PRESENT AND FUTURE RELATIONS WITH THE GDR, THIS FLEXIBILITY WILL BE USEFUL TO MEET THE EXPECTED INCREASE IN U.S. GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL PLANNED FOR EAST BERLIN. THE NEW CHANCERY BUILDING ALSO CONTAINS A LIBRARY AND ADEQUATE GARAGING AND STORAGE SPACE, AVAILABLE ONLY AT PREMIUM RATES ELSEWHERE IN EAST BERLIN.

2. EMBASSY'S HANDLING OF QUESTIONS ABOUT SECURITY MATTERS, I.E. BUGS, IS EXCELLENT AND WE BELIEVE THAT THIS CONFIDENTIAL

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LINE SHOULD BE FOLLOWED IN RESPONSE TO ALL SUCH QUESTIONS.

3. IF PRESSED FOR ADDITIONAL TECHNICAL DETAILS, EMBASSY SHOULD SUGGEST THAT THESE BE RAISED WITH THE DEPARTMENT.

4. DEPARTMENT CONCURS WITH EMBASSY'S PROPOSED HANDLING OF ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING ESTABLISHMENT OF EMBASSY

IN EAST BERLIN IN VIEW OF US POLICY OF NOT RECOGNIZING GDR CLAIM THAT EAST BERLIN IS THE CAPITAL OF THE GDR. VANCE

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